RAILWAY JOTTINGS.

Our new Chancellor of the Exchequer it is said has been consulting several of the more eminent of the Liverpool brokers on the subject of railway legislation.——The "Land and Companies Clauses Consolidation" bill, now before the Commons, is held by some of the more practical men in the city as a desirable remedy for the deficiencies of former proceedings on the part of the legislature relative to the winding up of railway companies.——The customs have agreed to take the average of colonial cargoes of railway sleepers, by piling sixty pieces of each description, and taking the length, height, and breadth, to the quarter of a foot.——A new first-class passenger carriage on a somewhat novel principle has been lately built. It runs on eight wheels, and is expected to obviate the jerking which arises from inequalities on either side of the rail, and to prevent the wheels from getting over them in rapid curves, the plan involving what is equivalent to a hinge in the middle of the frame-work, so that the whole is easily turned as a lorry or omnibus. The chief novelty, however, consists in the mode of reversing so long a carriage on the ordinary turn-tables.——The Great Western Company, if they obtain the extension of the broad gauge to Birmingham, intend, it is said, to abandon their Oxford and Rugby Line, at the point where the Oxford and Birmingham Junction leaves that line. The company also promises, when the Oxford and Birmingham Line is opened to run trains between London and Birmingham in three hours and three quarters instead of four hours and thirty-five minutes, as by the London and Birmingham at present.——The Directors of the Great Western have adopted at Bath the system of taking care of the passengers' luggage, charging 2d. on each article to meet the responsibility and expense.——A complete avalanche of earth from an embankment was carried down on Thursday week upon the rails of the Sheffield and Manchester line, by the bursting of a culvert under the Saltersbrook turnpike road, at Woodhead, in consequence of the heavy fall of rain. It is calculated that 3,000 yards of earth fell, and lay 30 feet deep on the line, and 60 feet wide, for a length of 50 yards. It dammed up the mouth of the tunnel, in which the water stood 3 feet deep. Navigators were promptly set to work to clear away the immense mass.——The Richmond line was opened on Monday last. It has cost only 170,000*l.*, though the original estimate was 260,000*l.* Mr. Locke is the engineer. It was completed in nine months, or at the rate of a mile a month. The fares are to be 8d., 10d., and 1s.——A curious line of railway is said to have been lately opened between Paris and Sceaux — the celebrated park *bal champêtre* village. It is 7 miles long, and was invented by M. Aioux, the inventor of the *trains articulés*, or jointed. It consists entirely of curves, some of them of only 100 feet radius! The termini are circles, where, as in the sharp turns, the first and last carriages come right opposite one another. The axles, instead of being fixed parallel, are free to turn on a pivot, and are made to place themselves in the radius of the curve by guide-wheels or rollers running obliquely against the inside of the rail. The carriages are connected by iron bars. Near Sceaux, the road is a zig-zag, and the train "tacks" up the hill on a rise of one in ninety! How indescribably characteristic of the Parisians this zig-zag flighty curiosity somehow is! The association with the *bals champêtre*, too, how thoroughly French! — the dancing whirl of the rail with the whirl of the waltz, whither it so appropriately leads!

Church of St. Mary-le-Strand.—The steeple of this church, one of Gibbs', has been scraped and partially repaired, the joints stopped, &c., at an expense of 47*l.* 10s., exclusive of the scaffolding. The latter was efficiently erected by Masey and Son, of Clare-market, and cost 30*l.* We mention the repair chiefly for the latter fact, which is a useful *datum*. The weathercock had not worked for thirty years. It is to be regretted, that the parish do not appear to be willing to repair the body of the church, which, externally, stands much in need of it.

Miscellanea.

Vitrified Walls.—At a recent meeting of the British Archæological Association, Mr. T. Pryer read a paper on the ancient vitrified forts in Scotland, particularly that upon Craig Phadric, Aberdeenshire. This fort occupies the entire summit of the hill, which has an elevation of 1,150 feet. In shape it is a parallelogram, being about 250 feet by 100; the walls are traceable, though covered with moss and heather; no cement has been used; the stones are unwrought, and connected together by a kind of substance in some places resembling lava, but in general more like the scoriæ of a foundry; the whole of the stones had been apparently softened and partially melted by fire, and it was evident that the entire structure had been subjected to intense heat. At the conclusion of the paper, Mr. Saull observed that the builders of these ancient forts, which he considered dated a little anterior to the Roman Conquest, had probably used wood and kelp for vitrifying the walls, and he explained the manner in which he considered it had been effected. Mr. J. S. Buckingham fully agreed in the opinions given by Mr. Saull, and stated the ancient buildings at Babylon appeared analogous to the vitrified forts. In the Birs Nimrod, or temple of Belus, there was to be noticed a mass of brick masonry 170 feet high, the exterior and interior surfaces of which had been calcined. Various theories had been advanced to account for the vitrification; some thought lightning to have been the agent; others sought a cause in the custom of the Persian fire-worshippers, of maintaining perpetual fire; but he considered that advanced by Mr. Saull as the more rational. Mr. Buckingham quoted the sacred Scriptures as throwing a light upon the mode of burning the walls; the expression, "and they took bricks and burnt them thoroughly," is still more applicable in the original text, which might be translated, "and they took bricks and burnt them to a burning."

More Foreign Competition with British Manufactures.—We have already had occasion to notice the somewhat startling announcement, that the Sheffield cutlers have been bearded by foreign ones even in their own workshops; and we now observe, that a somewhat similar invasion of the territories of the manufactures of glass is threatened. "Serious apprehensions are entertained by the glass manufacturers in this district," says the *Birmingham Gazette*, "that a certain portion of their trade must give way to foreign competition. Several Belgian travellers have lately offered for sale wine-glasses and tumblers at the merchants warehouses in this town, at from 25 to 35 per cent. cheaper than the same description of articles can be produced in this country. The same disadvantage to a still greater extent is apprehended with respect to ornamental-glass. In the manufacture of articles requiring a great amount of engraving and cutting, the disadvantages against the British manufacturer are said to be very decided." It is some consolation, in this lamentable and extraordinary dilemma, that, "in the manufacture of plate-glass, there is little to be feared."

Ancient Timber Edifices of England.—Mr. John Clayton, A.I.B.A., announces a work on this subject containing twenty-six lithographic plates, comprising views and details alternately arranged. The work will comprehend a series of specimens of ancient timber work, illustrative of the use of this material in the erection of buildings, for a variety of public and domestic purposes; the subjects illustrated, with the exception of the Town Hall, Hereford, which is restored from authority, exist in a perfect condition, and are chiefly collected from Herefordshire, Shropshire, and Cheshire. They comprise the principal of the remarkable edifices, designed by John Abel, and erected about the date 1600. John Abel was created one of his Majesty's carpenters in the reign of Charles I., and acquired great celebrity in the west of England.

Submarine Telegraph.—Recent experiments in Portsmouth harbour have established the fact beyond doubt, that information may be transmitted through the water with the same facility as it is along the lines already formed on land. In a score of years England will be in *daily* communication with all her foreign possessions.

American Copper Region.—"The stories which reach us from the copper region on Lake Superior," says the *Toronto Patriot*, "almost daily startle our credulity, and were it not that we have ourselves seen some of these large masses of native copper, we should find it difficult to credit them, however well authenticated." One mass, 13 feet in length, is instanced, and the Ontanagon copper rock, weighing about two tons, is alluded to as "one of the wonders of the world;" but between that mass and one recently met with, "the difference is as great as between a mustard seed shot and a cannon-ball." The proprietors "have 'drifted' longitudinally about 90 feet without finding its length. They have sunk down about 4 feet in places, without finding its depth. Its average thickness is about 18 inches. And the mass thus far uncovered, is estimated at about 90 tons in weight, and its commercial value when raised and smelted, will exceed 25,000 dollars." It is to be sawn into blocks by a steam-engine.

Dauding the Interior of Churches.—A correspondent of the *Stamford Mercury* says, "The interior of Louth Parish Church has undergone a 'cleaning-up this May-day time,' with sundry buckets of white and colour wash, after the fashion of kitcheos and stables; and, as far as such applications could make it so, looks clean enough; but what could induce the churchwardens to cover over with such, or any other wash, the fine stone pillars, arches, buttresses, and mullions, and thus destroy their architectural effect, we cannot divine. They might as well (nay, with greater propriety) have whitewashed their marble chimney-pieces and mahogany chairs and tables in their own houses; for in that case no one would have a right to complain; but here, where the parish money is used to destroy the beauty of the church, and to hide from view such parts as may require substantial repair, it is right to call the attention of the parishioners to such doings."

Violent Earthquake at Smyrna.—Two minarets have been shaken down, and a vast number of houses shattered, by a shock which occurred on the 25th ult., and the casualties would have even far exceeded the reality, but for the very prudent practice here, as in some other localities subject to earthquakes, of building dwelling houses of wood, which of course is not so liable to be toppled, or even rent, especially as no large timbers or other heavy materials are used in their construction. Iron would be even preferable to wood in such localities, and would remove the risk from fire, which it is well known frequently consummates the destruction which the earthquake originates.

Operative Carpenters and Joiners.—We have received a copy of a circular issued by a committee of workmen, appointed to take steps for the establishment of a trade society on an improved footing, "and at the same time afford the members opportunities of associating together, apart from the excitements of the public-house, for the transaction of business, the cultivation of their faculties, and the improvement of their condition." Any scheme with such an end in view, to be carried out by legitimate means, would seem to be entitled to support. The first inquiry of course is, what are the means proposed? Care must be taken to avoid arraying class against class.

The Birmingham Cemetery.—The design adopted for the Church of England Cemetery, at Birmingham, is that of Mr. J. Hamilton, of Gloucester. The chapel will be in the decorated style of Gothic architecture, with a tower and spire. The ornamented parts of the building will be of white stone and the plain of Wesley Castle red stone. The catacombs will be in two rows, of an elliptical form.

Carpenters' Tool-baskets from Faro.—The Faro baskets, which are sometimes also used for carrying fruit, are made of a soft and pliable description of rush, with a strong, thick, matted handle. They are charged with a variable amount of customs duty on importation, valued occasionally at 30s. for the largest and 15s. for the smallest size per bundle of five dozen each.

Wesleyan Church in Paris.—The old church of St. Vincent de Paul, in the street Montholon, has been taken by the Wesleyans, and fitted up to hold 800 persons. Mr. W. Corderoy was the architect employed.

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